593 595 The husband has absolute claim to the sexual rights of his wife. Should he have more than one wife, he must regularly alternate his stay at the house of the wife with whom he sleeps, spending one night in turn with each of his wives. Though he might not have sexual intercourse with her, he must spend the [692] night in her house. Should he, for any reason, break the regu- [684] lar alternation, his wife can bring him before the Alkali who would force him to observe the rule or dissolve the marriage. In this way, although the husband has absolute rights, the law once again helps to protect the wife. It can, and frequently does happen that a man will have preferences among his wives. He may recently have married a young girl whom he finds more attractive than an older wife, but he may not allow his attraction for her to cause him to favor her by sleeping with her, at night, [846] more frequently than he does with his other wives. After a woman has borne a child, her husband must not have intercourse with her for forty days, but he must sleep in her house when her turn comes despite the fact that he may not have intercourse with her.

595 Where there is more than one wife, the wife who has been married to the household head for the longest period of time is senior wife in the household. This is a position of authority in the household. Though she may not curse or beat the other wives, she does give orders which are obeyed by the other wives. Disputes between lesser wives are settled by the head wife. If one lesser wife will not cease making trouble after being warned, the head wife may tell her husband that the lesser wife is a per-

837
836
562 available only to her husband and this turns to sexual freedom and experimentation when she is a divorced woman.(1)

837
562 This results in much marital infidelity on the part of married men and women. As we have seen, this can take a sanctioned and an unsanctioned form for men, while for married women any extra-marital sexual intercourse is considered to be adultery. Thus X, a Magumeri man, well known for his extra-marital sex relations woke up a local official late one night and asked him to come and see the woman whom X had brought to his compound. This was to ensure public recognition of the fact that he was sleeping with a power (divorced
[593] woman) and not someone's wife. When asked what his wife thought of his behaviour X replied that she did not like it. He added that it was none of her business and she could leave him if she wished.

593
837
684 On the other hand, Kanuri men are usually extremely suspicious of their wives. One man whose wife attended local dances used to come to these evening celebrations to make sure that no one shone a flashlight on his spouse while she was dancing. The only time that this did occur the husband reported the incident to the Village Head who in turn locked up the voyeur for the night. This same woman was observed on several occasions entering single men's sleeping huts while her husband was away on trading trips.

837 Even one seemingly submissive woman, the wife of an upper class man, was observed to blossom out suddenly and visit strange

[589] (1) This is not meant to imply that the woman has complete freedom, even when divorced. A woman may have one or two men supporting her and sleeping with her while she is divorced (one at a time is more common), often for only periods of a week or two at a time. Women who sleep with too many men at the same time while divorced are considered bad marriage risks and tend to be regarded as acting somewhat more like a prostitute, rather than a divorced woman, who should really be going through a series of "trial" marriages, one of which will eventually lead to the real thing.

837 households when her husband was away. Several informants remarked that it was apparent, now her husband was away, that she wished to have some tum-tum (pleasure, with a sexual implication).

593 837 Whether or not the husband is away, women must leave the compound for ceremonies, water carrying, helping other women to prepare for ceremonies, going to market, etc. Only men with wives in seclusion can restrict, and then only partially, female activities beyond the household. Within this framework, all Kanuri men know from their own experience how easily liaisons can be set up with married women, and therefore become anxious and mistrustful of wives who leave the compound too often.

837 584 The covert subversion of marital fidelity norms is also illustrated in the role of the sərsər. The sərsər is an old woman who for a fee, acts as an intermediary between a man and a married woman in promulgating a future marriage between them, which presumes the divorce of the woman from her present husband. The relationship arranged between the man and the married woman by the sərsər often [684] infers an adulterous sexual union as well. If discovered by the husband, the old woman is often taken into court with her male employer and fined heavily. However, among males who value their respectability, the old woman is usually warned at first to stay away from the compound, and the wife admonished not to have anything to do with her.

832 Another illustration that documents the social recognition of female desire for sexual freedom is the concept of tarwo which refers to walking about looking for a partner for sexual intercourse. Any man or woman walking about the town alone is suspect of tarwo. There are a few definitive signs such as man having his hat pushed for-

632
661 He therefore supported the lower class person against his fellow upper class member.

632 Several months later Bukar was involved in a case against
661 a Fulani herder whose cows had eaten his millet. The case came
683 before Lawan who ruled that although the Fulani had pulled a
684 knife on Bukar (a serious offence), it was Bukar who had started the fight, and it was this act that had caused the cows to wander over Bukar's field and devour his, as well as another man's, crops. Bukar was then fined heavily for starting a fight, fined for the other man's crops and given an extra fine of five shillings as kafelo for the District Head. (Bukar reports that his crops were already eaten before the fight started; besides this, pulling a knife during a fight is a separate offence to the fight itself, and the Fulani was not fined for this misdemeanour).

632 In discussing the matter, Bukar's senior, the teacher ex-
661 plained that Lawan was angry at Bukar for his behaviour over the mats and was adjudicating against him for this reason. When Bukar finally raised the money for the fine he was told by the teacher to give the money to Lawan and to say that he (Bukar) was a small insignificant poor peasant. He was further instructed to tell Lawan that if there was any help that Lawan needed in house building, he (Bukar) would be pleased to offer his services. The teacher also cautioned Bukar about the future. If Lawan continued to adjudicate against him and give him heavy fines, then he should request to take the case to a higher court. Thus the teacher wished his peasant-follower to make his peace with Lawan, but if this were impossible then higher authorities would be resorted to and Lawan's power by-passed. In other words the teacher felt that the political structure of the town should be respected within limits.

This case illustrates how easy it is for a Lawan to make a reprisal for lack of sensitivity to his power and authority on the part of the peasants under his jurisdiction. His power of granting land use rights, settling disputes, and imposing fines, intersects the lives of his peasants at such vulnerable points that to thwart his power and authority and remain in his territory without the possibility of reprisal would be impossible.

632 A Lawan is installed officially by the Shehu at an invest-
[643] iture ceremony in Maiduguri. Even if he inherited the position he must still be "turbaned" by the Shehu to hold office properly. Some village areas claim the same lines of Lawans well back into the 19th century,

442 out for some new supplier relations since he has recently lost money
571 for Alkali Bukar (1) and the latter, kinship notwithstanding, has been reluctant to continue his financing. Without being asked, Ajimi referred to the possibility of relationships in the future with non-kin backers to meet his need for a mai gida.

(d) Alkali Bukar

441 Alkali Bukar who up until summer of 1957, had been financing
452 Ajimi, was at one time the Alkali of Magumeri and still owns a choice
[423] farm plot there which his son plants and harvests for him with the aid
[648] of labourers. When he was dismissed from his judicial post several years ago by the British he went into trade using his house in Maiduguri as his headquarters.

441 He gives out money to people like Ajimi to trade with and
452 takes a share of the profits. Some of these subordinates are kin rela-
571 tions, most are not. Those who are not consanguinal kin start out in his household as tada njima where they carry water, cut grass for the for the horses, run messages and so on. For this they receive their food, shelter, clothing and a little spending money. If over a period of one to two years they prove trustworthy the Alkali gives them some
441 money for trade. During 1956-57 he engaged in the following ventures
438 in Bornu:

(1) Several (two or three) "boys" bought millet in Geidam for sale in Maiduguri.

(2) One "boy" sold cloth (obtained by the Alkali) in Damasac, as well as onions, which the subordinate obtained himself with the Alkali's money.

---

[684] (1) Ajimi has a penchant for adultery and has had to pay several large fines recently, the money for which he obtained from his trading receipts.